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Message Text

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11
ACTION EA-14

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CINCPAC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, AS
SUBJECT: COUNTRY PARTY SPEECH AND OTHER ELECTION NEWS

REF: A) CANBERRA 2549; B) CANBERRA 2463

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY. COUNTRY PARTY LEADER ANTHONY GAVE HIS PARTY'S POLICY SPEECH FOR MAY 18 ELECTION ON NATIONWIDE TELEVISION MAY 2. ANTHONY ZEROED IN ON INFLATION AND TREND TOWARD SOCIALISM WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED TO CURRENT ALP GOVERNMENT AS MAJOR ISSUES IN CAMPAIGN. ANTHONY'S SPEECH DID NOT MENTION EITHER DEFENSE OR FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS WHICH HE APPARENTLY IS LEAVING UP TO HIS LIBERAL COUNTERPARTS TO PROVIDE. TONE OF SPEECH WAS EARNEST AND SERIOUS BUT AS ANTICIPATED MADE MAJOR POINT OF DISABILITIES UNDER WHICH AUSTRALIAN FARMERS HAVE HAD TO LABOR UNDER CURRENT GOVERNMENT. PUBLIC OPINION POLLS TAKEN IN MID-APRIL SHOW ALP AND LIBERAL-COUNTRY PARTY RUNNING AT ABOUT 45 PERCENT EACH OF POPULAR VOTE. DLP AND AUSTRALIA PARTY HAVE 4 PERCENT EACH ACCORDING TO THIS POLL. END SUMMARY.

2. COUNTRY PARTY LEADER DOUG ANTHONY GAVE 15 MINUTE NATIONWIDE
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TELEVISION ADDRESS MAY 2, OUTLINING COUNTRY PARTY ATTITUDES

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TOWARD GOVERNMENT. MAJOR THEMES OF ANTHONY'S ADDRESS WERE ATTACKS UPON ALP GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC POLICIES AND ANTHONY'S CLAIMS THAT PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM IS PURSUING SOCIALISTIC POLICIES WHICH ENDANGER AUSTRALIAN WAY OF LIFE. DURING SPEECH, ANTHONY ACCUSED WHITLAM GOVERNMENT OF SINGLING OUT RURAL POPULATION FOR SPECIAL TREATMENT UNDER SOCIALISTIC PRECEPTS BY DENYING DAIRY AND SUPERPHOSPHATE BOUNTIES TO AUSTRALIAN FARMERS. HE STATED THAT COST OF SUCH BOUNTIES AMOUNTED TO ONLY ABOUT $350 MILLION A YEAR, AND IMPLIED THIS WAS SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR GROWTH OF AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURE UNDER PREVIOUS LIBERAL-COUNTRY PARTY GOVERNMENT. HE TRIED SPECIFICALLY TO REFUTE WHITLAM'S CLAIM IN PERTH THAT AUSTRALIAN FARMER IS MUCH BETTER OFF NOW THAN EVER BEFORE BY CITING RISING COSTS FOR FARMERS INCLUDING HIGH RATE OF DOMESTIC INFLATION.

3. ON SOCIALISTIC THEME, ANTHONY SAID IT WOULD TAKE SOME TIME FOR LIBERAL-COUNTRY PARTY GOVERNMENT TO TURN INFLATION AROUND BECAUSE OF HIGH LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT SPENDING UNDER THE ALP. HE ALSO STATED THAT AUSTRALIANS SHOULD MAKE FEWER DEMANDS ON THE GOVERNMENT, AND IN EFFECT, ANTHONY CALLED FOR A RETURN TO A KIND OF "RUGGED INDIVIDUALISM" REPRESENTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN FARMER WHO ANTHONY DECLARED SHOULD ENJOY THE FRUITS OF HIS LABORS WITHOUT HIGH INFLATION RATES AND HIGH GOVERNMENT TAXATION. HE URGED YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICULARLY TO REJECT THE ALP ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH SOCIALISM IN AUSTRALIA, AND AT ONE POINT ACCUSED PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM OF ATTEMPTING TO INSTALL AN UN-AUSTRALIAN PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM IN CANBERRA. IN SUM, HE APPEALED TO AUSTRALIANS TO BE SELF-RELAINT AND INDEPENDENT.

4. ANTHONY'S SPEECH CONTRASTS SHARPLY WITH THE SOCIAL WELFARE THEMES IN BOTH THE INITIAL ELECTION SPEECHES OF WHITLAM AND LIBERAL LEADER SNEDDEN. ANTHONY'S SPEECH SEEMS ANACHRONISTIC IN THIS ERA OF THE GOVERNMENT DOING MANY THINGS ON A NATIONAL LEVEL WHICH WERE NOT INCLUDED IN THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN PREVIOUS DECADES. EXCEPT FOR THE RURAL POPULATION, ANTHONY'S CALL FOR A RETURN "RUGGED INDIVIDUALISM" SEEMS DESTINED TO FALL GENERALLY UPON UNWILLING EARS. THE FORM AND STYLE OF ANTHONY'S TELEVISION ADDRESS DIFFERED MARKEDLY ALSO FROM THOSE OF WHITLAM AND SNEDDEN WHOSE TELEVISION APPEARANCES HAPPENED BEFORE RATHER LARGE AUDIENCES OF ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTERS WHO FREQUENTLY INTERRUPTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

WITH APPLAUSE AND SHOUTED ENCOURAGEMENTS. ANTHONY APPEARED BY HIMSELF SEATED AT A DESK IN FRONT OF A FIREPLACE AND WITHOUT ANY OTHER PERSON APPARENTLY PRESENT. HIS STYLE WAS THAT OF A MATURE THINKER AND SERIOUS INDIVIDUAL WITH A POINT OF VIEW WHICH HE WAS EARNESTLY TRYING TO GET ACROSS TO THE ELECTORATE.

5. AS ANTICIPATED, ANTHONY RECOMMENDED NO VOTES ON THE FOUR REFERENDA ASSOCIATED WITH THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION. HE DESCRIBED

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THE REFERENDA AS AN ATTEMPT BY THE ALP GOVERNMENT TO ENTRENCH ITSELF IN OFFICE FOR THE REST OF THE CENTURY. IF THE REFERENDA SHOULD SUCCEED, ANTHONY STATED THAT IT WOULD BE "PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE" TO REMOVE THE LABOR GOVERNMENT FROM OFFICE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

6. THE LATEST MORGAN GALLUP POLL TAKEN IN MID-APRIL AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF DOUBLE DISSOLUTION INDICATES THAT THE ALP AND THE LIBERAL-COUNTRY PARTY COALITION ARE RUNNING NECK-IN-NECK AT ABOUT 45 PERCENT EACH IN THE VOTERS CHOICE FOR BOTH THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. THE DLP SHOWS A SLIGHT INCREASE IN POPULARITY TO 4 PERCENT ALTHOUGH NOT AS HIGH AS THE 5 PERCENT IT ACTUALLY PULLED IN THE 1972 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ELECTION. THE AUSTRALIA PARTY IS CREDITED WITH ABOUT 4 PERCENT OF THE CURRENT VOTE AS WELL.

7. IN OTHER ELECTION NEWS, LIBERAL LEADER SNEDDEN HAS BEEN UNDER FIRE ON TWO GROUNDS: (A) THAT HE HAS BACKTRACKED FROM STATEMENTS MADE EARLIER IN THE CAMPAIGN TO THE EFFECT THAT HE WOULD CURB INFLATION WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF TAKING OFFICE AND THAT HE WOULD ANNOUNCE HIS PROPOSED CABINET PRIOR TO THE MAY 18 ELECTION. WITH REGARD TO CURBING INFLATION, SNEDDEN IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION IN BRISBANE REFUSED TO BE DRAWN OUT ON ANY PARTICULAR TIME SCHEDULE. SNEDDEN HAS ALSO NOW ANNOUNCED THAT HE WILL NOT NAME THE MEMBERS OF HIS PROPOSED CABINET BEFORE THE ELECTIONS; AND (B) NEWS REPORTERS ARE INTERPRETING THE LACK OF ANY MENTION IN POLICY STATEMENTS OF THE LEVEL OF DEFENSE SPENDING WHICH WOULD OCCUR UNDER A PROPOSED LIBERAL-COUNTRY PARTY COALITION GOVERNMENT AS EVIDENCE THAT THE CURRENT OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE NO INTENTION OF INCREASING DEFENSE SPENDING IN THE BUDGET. THUS FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLIC REJOINDER TO THIS CHARGE.
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